

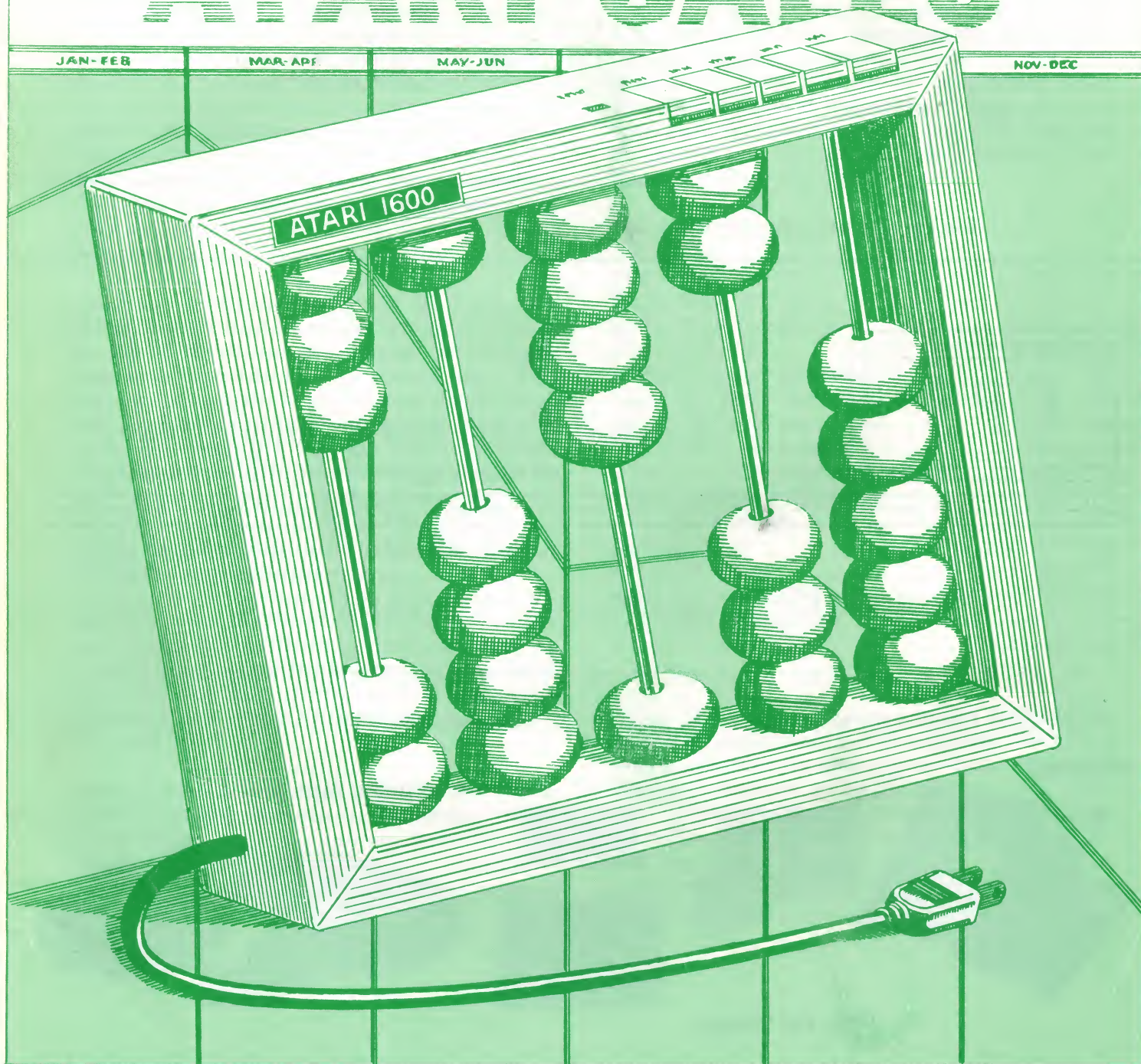
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April, 1984
Vol. 4 NO. 4

M.A.C.E. JOURNAL

"Devoted Exclusively To The Atari Computer User"

ATARI SALES



Published by the Michigan Atari Computer Enthusiasts

COMING
ATTRACTIONS
April 17th.
Meeting

Here's the tentative schedule of topics for the April meeting. Please note that this meeting IS on the 3rd, Tuesday of the month.

- Business meeting
- ATR8000 demo
- Koala Pad demo
- Atari 800XL demo
- MicroFiler demo
- Various game demos
- BASIC FOR BEGINNERS

Tom Sturza
Program Coordinator

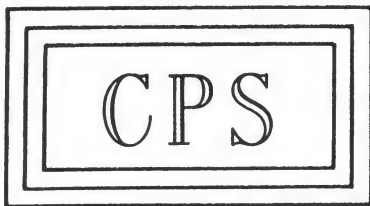
CHANGES IN
MEETING DATES

Due to scheduling conflicts with the City of Southfield, the meeting dates for MAY and JUNE have been rescheduled. The following is a list of meeting dates for the remainder of 1984.

April 17
** May 29 **
** June 11 **
July 17
August 21
September 18
October 16
November 20
December 18

TARICON '84 - August 25 & 26

Please mark your calendars so you'll be sure not to miss meeting night.



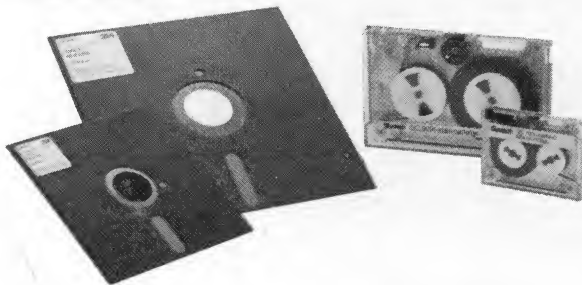
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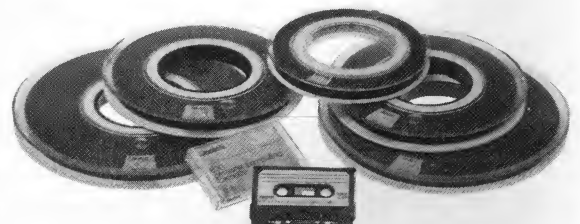
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Computer Tape



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HELP TARICON '84

Presidential Ramblings

by Mike Lechkun

Well it looks like Atari is up to a new trick. "Oh boy! Something new from Sunnyvale!" I can hear the cries now. But you probably won't like this. In no doubt a cost cutting measure, Atari is switching keyboards on their 800XL computers. While I noticed no real difference other than the "feel," some have objected to this change. If the feel of the keyboard is important to you, go out and get an 800XL as soon as you can! So much from the land of mega-buck losses!

TARICON '84 plans are going just o-tay for now. CHAOS in Lansing is doing a great job trying to get midwestern user groups to support and assist us. See their article for their progress report. We're still looking for someone with convention-planning experience. If you can lend a hand, please come forth and volunteer your services. MACE needs to get their half off the ground, and fast!

I'm really impressed with the way our new SYSOP Walter Nebucher has handled running the MACE MAIN bulletin board. He's added some new features like an advertisers file, which unfortunately is empty now (hint, hint). I've also contributed to Walter an article to put on his Viewpoint file. He has some other file space that is open for suggestions on what to put in there. You can reach him by calling the BBS at (313) 978-1685, or by calling the MACE HOTLINE (voice) at (313) 978-2458. The WHAT???

Yes folks, the MACE HOTLINE is back. You can use the HOTLINE to get current meeting information, to communicate with the MACE officers, or get current SIG meeting information. That number again is (313) 978-2458.

That's all for this month. Hope to see you at the May meeting next month. Remember that's the Birthday meeting, and you have to bring your membership card to get in. So don't forget -- we'll have some big surprises in store for you!

If you have a spare moment or two and want to see TARICON '84 succeed, then write or call an ATARI related vendor. Ask them if they will be at TARICON '84 in Southfield this August. Let them know that you are interested in their product and would like to see it at TARICON '84.

If they want information they can write to MACE, or to CHAOS, PO Box 16132, Lansing, MI 48823. If time is short, they can call the MACE HOTLINE for a more immediate response.

The more phone calls they receive, the more likely they are to show up at TARICON '84. In an effort to make it easier on your phone bill, I am listing several toll-free numbers. If you have more numbers to add, then give them to Mike Lechkun, or call CHAOS President Ike Hudson at (517) 351-3092.

The numbers to get you started are:

TRAK (disk drives)	1-800-323-4853
RANA (disk drives)	1-800-421-2207
NOVATION (modems)	1-800-439-5419
MPI (printers)	1-800-821-8848
MOSAIC (memory boards)	1-800-547-2807
LEADING EDGE (printers, etc)	1-800-343-6833
INDUS (disk drives)	1-800-334-6387
DATASOFT (software)	1-800-423-5916
COMPU-COVER (computer accys)	1-800-874-6391
CONVOLOGIC (interfaces)	1-800-874-6391
AXIOM (printers)	1-800-232-9466
ATARI SALES	1-800-538-8478
APX (software)	1-800-538-1862
ANALOG MAGAZINE	1-800-345-8112
COMPUTE! MAGAZINE	1-800-334-0868
ATARI LOCAL REP	1-313-826-8893

If we are going to have a great TARICON, then we need these vendors, among others as well. We need to show them that we would like to see them at TARICON '84. The only way to let them know that there is interest is by calling or writing to them. If you start at the top of the list and work your way down whenever you have a chance, then you will have done a big part.

Most of the toll-free numbers are in California. That means you can call in the evening while watching TV. Don't be shy, pick up the phone and call. Just say, "I am interested in seeing your products, but don't always have the opportunity in this area. Will you be at TARICON '84 in Southfield MI in August?" If you have any questions about their equipment or software, then ask at that time. You will be helping us all by calling. LET THEM KNOW WE WANT THEM TO COME TO TARICON '84!

We encourage all other newsletters to reprint this article. You may want to add some local numbers to the list. The more help we get, the better TARICON '84 will be for everyone. If the first one is successful, there will be a second and third, etc. The next one could be near you!

MACE DISK LIBRARY

By B.J.Franczyk

The tremendous growth and popularity of the MACE Disk Library can no longer be ignored. Since you want to know about your Disk Library here is a complete report.

The Disk Library as we now know it, is largely the work of Chet Gonterman. The efforts of Chet and his staff of volunteers have produced a collection of programs, written by Atari users and donated for the benefit of the MACE organization. The library grows by at least 3 new disks each month and will complete the 3rd series (AB-ZB) shortly. MACE members may purchase these disks for \$5.00 each at any MACE meeting. Mail order is also available. The first disk in a mail order cost \$6.00 to help defray postage cost. There are all kinds of programs: Games, Education, Utilities, Strategy, Music, as well as programs for the home or business.

Proprietary disks are also available. These are special because the authors have sold these programs to be published and are under contract. Special arrangements have been made to allow these to remain in the library and continue to be available to MACE

members. They sell for \$6.00 and come with documentation. Sorry, but these cannot be sold through mail order. Besides being an excellent buy they are pure evidence of the quality of our disk library and the cleverness of our disk librarian. We are also proud of the members that create these and think enough of MACE to make sure these programs enhance our library.

If you have a program you have written or even a public domain program you have keyed, and wish to see it in the library, give it to the Submissions Chairman back at the disk table at any meeting. These programs are then reviewed, categorized, rated, copied and made available for sale to MACE members. The disk table is set up and open for business each meeting by 7:00 p.M. What this translates to is that Chet and the gang work very hard each month to put this all together and still arrives early to accommodate the long continuous line each meeting.

There is one sad fact that has been evident and I believe once brought to light could resolve a difficult situation. Chet has been seen untold number of times struggling with the growing number of boxes to get them to and from the parking lot. Since he has not asked for help from the floor, I am mentioning this to you because I believe once our members become aware they would gladly volunteer to give him a hand. This problem exists for the cassette librarian who sets up a table, the submissions chairman who brings equipment and all of the other people who set up tables and equipment to service our members. Please remember "Many hands make light work" and pitch in to make a difficult job a little easier.

I have also been told that Jim Philips, our cassette librarian, is working hard and has a few surprises for those cassette users. I promise to report on the cassette library soon.

One last note to complete this report. Fred Kandah has temporarily resigned as the Submissions Chairman in favor of continuing his education at the University of Michigan. We want to tell him that we miss him and wish him well. Good Luck Fred!! Stay in touch!!

ATARI RPG II

36K Cartridge

A Review by Moe Demming

Just received a new copy of the Atari RPG II cartridge/disk combo, and boy is it hot. Why RPG II for the Atari, you ask? This is another in the moves by Atari CEO James Morgan to market only sellable products that the public demands. But what is RPG II?

RPG II is a high level computer language designed primarily for the IBM System 3 new generation mainframe computers. It was developed about fifteen years ago by IBM. It gained wide acceptance not only in small scale computer installations, but in medium and large scale installations as well. The primary advantage of RPG II (Report Program Generator) is that it provides a quick and easy method for writing programs for a variety of business applications. The original RPG language developed has gone through a series of evolutionary developments to get to where it is now: one of the first high-level languages to be brought down to the home computer level. How did Atari do it?

Although ingenious, they still had to make a few sacrifices. RPG II requires the basic cartridge in the RIGHT slot and the RPG II cart in the left. This decision eliminates the use of this language for the 400, 600XL, 800XL, 1200XL and 1450XLD. But who would use those computers, anyway? Also required is the transducer disk to be run at booting up. This disk also requires the Atari 1050 disk drive (an 810 translator is available).

One of the most clever things the engineers in Sunnyvale did was to make this language only 40 columns to save owners from having to purchase 80 column boards! However that left the other 40 columns in each individual specification line to be made up for elsewhere. That hasn't been worked out yet, but Atari has promised to update at any time any cartridge returned to it. Atari engineers also eliminated file specifications I and O from column 6 to save another 4K of memory.

RPG II should be available on 4/1/84, projected cost will be \$79.95. April phools everywhere will be sure to get this one.

GROW RATE BASIC PROGRAM

Here is a nifty little program downloaded from the BBS. It calculates an average grow rate based on future projections.

```
1 REM -----
2 REM AVERAGE GROWTH RATE
3 REM FUTURE PROJECTIONS
4 REM -----
5 GRAPHICS 0
10 PRINT "AVERAGE GROWTH RATE,"
15 PRINT "FUTURE PROJECTIONS"
20 PRINT
30 DIM S(20)
40 PRINT "NUMBER OF YEARS FIGURES
   ESTABLISHED";
50 INPUT N
60 FOR I=1 TO N
70 IF I>1 THEN 100
80 PRINT "FIGURE: YEAR ";I;
90 GOTO 110
100 PRINT "      YEAR ";I;
110 INPUT X
112 S(I)=X
120 NEXT I
130 T=LOG(S(1))
140 V=0
150 FOR I=2 TO N
160 L=LOG(S(I))
170 T=T+L
180 V=V+(I-1)*L
190 NEXT I
200 A=6*(2*V/(N-1)-T)/(N)/(N+1)
210 G=EXP(A)-1
220 PRINT "AVERAGE GROWTH RATE = ";
225 PRINT INT(G*10000+0.5)/100;"%"
230 PRINT
240 S=EXP(T/N-A*(N-1)/2)
250 PRINT "(ENTER 0 TO END PROGRAM)"
260 PRINT "PROJECTED SALES FOR YEAR";
270 INPUT Y1
280 IF Y1=0 THEN 320
290 S1=S*(1+G)^(Y1-1)
300 PRINT "      = ";
305 PRINT INT(S1*100+0.5)/100
310 GOTO 260
320 END
```

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PLATO'S CORNER

I should preface this article by making it clear that this is not an April Fools joke. The article that follows is serious and hopefully informative. Maybe I should have saved this for next month but here goes.....

Hidden away in a shopping center near St. Louis is one of Atari's best kept secrets, Atari Adventure. The program is developed and owned by Atari Adventure, Inc., a subsidiary of Atari Inc. My tour guide was Randall Horton, Director of Design for Atari Adventure and a resident of good old Sunnyvale, California.

Let me discuss briefly the concept of A.A. then we'll describe the actual physical amenities. Atari was interested in developing computer learning centers to provide people of all ages a relaxing environment in which to learn about computers. It should be understood that the centers are not retail outlets. The educational portions of the centers are intended for the demonstration of Atari computer equipment and Atari developed software only. The centers are to be staffed by knowledgeable individuals with an extensive background in Atari computers.

I have attempted to include as part of this article a number of photographs of the operation to give you a better feel of the actual space. The learning center consists of ten user stations each consisting of an Atari 1200, 1050 disk drive, modem and color monitor. Each station is in turn connected to two large screen color monitors at the front of the classroom. The instructor may at his option switch your screen to the large monitor to explain to the rest of the individuals your particular problem. Instruction can be structured in a number of ways, in class form or individually.

The advantages of A.A. seem to be immediately obvious an individual interested in computers may receive a demonstration without the pressures of a hot breathing salesperson standing over their shoulder. Or a person interested in previewing a particular piece of Atari software may do so prior to buying that particular piece of software. Almost all of the Atari and A.P.X. developed

software is available for the enthusiast to use.

So what is the cost of all of this available technology and expertise? The initial price established by Atari is \$4.00 per hour. When you think that many times the center and it's instructor may be available to you and maybe only one or two other individuals, this is really quite a bargain. Try hiring a computer tutor or programmer to help you with your particular problem, the \$4.00 fee will seem quite reasonable. How about previewing four or five of Atari's latest games, time required? maybe thirty minutes. The cost: \$2.00.

Even with all ten stations running at maximum the total revenue per hour could not seem to exceed \$40.00. So how does Atari expect to finance these centers for computer education? Well Atari also has a coin operated game division that will occupy the rear 2500 square feet of the operation. With 70 to 80 machines housing the latest in video arcade games it isn't difficult to see where the anticipated revenue will come from.

The problem is how do you separate the two functions to provide privacy for the educational center but reasonable exposure for the game section? The problem was solved quite successfully by Mr. Horton and his staff by giving the education center the exposure at the entrance and enclosing the space in glass. The game room has an adjacent entry with enough exposure to tempt the interest of the passerby.

The educational center is designed exceptionally well and the staff seems to be ready to take on even the most experienced of computer enthusiasts. My congratulations to Atari for this bold new concept and to Randall Horton for his successful design.

With a little bit of luck we should see a few Atari Adventure Centers in our area in the near future.

A number of members have asked about a used software swap night. Maybe if there is enough interest we could set something up at the May meeting. Original software and documentation only, absolutely no copies! Let me know if your interested and some ideas on how to set the program up.

NEW MACE DISK FOR MARCH

*** MACE PROGRAM LIBRARY ***

DISK	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	GROUP	RATING	TYPE	SECTORS
PB	CIRCUSRV	BREAK BALLOONS	GAME	8	BASIC	009
PB	GANTLET	U=UP,D=DOWN,L=LEFT,R=	GAME	9	BASIC	013
PB	GRAPHICS	DRAW WITH JOYSTICK	UTIL	10+	BASIC	007
PB	MENU	DISK DIR LOAD/GO	UTIL	9	BASIC	002
PB	PINBALL	BASIC PINBALL	GAME	7	BASIC	007

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DISK	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	GROUP	RATING	TYPE	SECTORS
QB	CALENDAR	SCREEN OR PRINTER	UTIL	7	BASIC	021
QB	DISKDIR	PRINT DISK DIRECTORY	UTIL	9	BASIC	011
QB	LINESPCR	LIST LINES ON GROUPS	UTIL	9	BASIC	005
QB	MENU	DISK DIR LOAD/GO	UTIL	9	BASIC	015
QB	MONEYMAT	MONEY MATTERS INV INFO	UTIL	8	BASIC	061
QB	MONITOR	MONITOR ODDMAN SCORES	UTIL	8	BASIC	014
QB	ODDMAN	PRESCOOL	EDUC	9	BASIC	109
QB	RECORD.DAT	SCORE SHEET FOR ODDMAN	UTIL	NA	FILE	001
QB	ROADBLOK.OBJ	AVOID CRASH	GAME	10	OBJ	010
QB	ROVCUPID	HAPPY VALENTINE LOVE	DEMO	9	BASIC	029
QB	STARS3D	STARLIGHT STARBRIGHT	DEMO	9	BASIC	014
QB	STOCKSHT	INVESTMENT INFO	UTIL	9	BASIC	053
QB	TAX83	DATA FILE FOR TAX83	UTIL	NA	FILE	001
QB	TAXES	TAX DEDUCTIONS	UTIL	8	BASIC	071
QB	TRCKYTIC	GET 4 IN ROW WINS	GAME	8	BASIC	075

*** MACE PROGRAM LIBRARY ***

DISK	PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	GROUP	RATING	TYPE	SECTORS
RB	CANUCK.OBJ	COMPUTER PINBALL	GAME	10+	OBJ	242
RB	CREDITS.DOC	THANKS ELECTRONIC ARTS	INFO	NA	FILE	004
RB	FLASH.OBJ	COMPUTER PINBALL	GAME	10	OBJ	242

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 FARMINGTON HILLS, MI 48018

THE ATARI AS A WORD
PROCESSOR -- WHY WOULD
ANYONE LOOK ANYWHERE
ELSE?

By Len Malysz

It's kind of fun -- watching people's reactions when they ask what kind of computer I bought to do word processing, and I reply "Atari 800." Most often, the reaction is something like "Oh," and the person resorts to the adult version of "I think I hear my mother calling me," exiting the conversation with great dispatch.

In these days of PCjr and Macintosh, it probably seems like an oddball choice, but in the context of the times, it made a lot of sense. In fact, if I had it to do over again, I'd still choose the Atari. Why? Maybe if I explain.

Back in '81, I was a freelance writer in search of a way to satisfy both my need for a word

lower case letters -- standard. Screen size -- hooked to any television set or to a monitor through a separate jack. Programming -- the Atari Word Processor software on disc, with excellent documentation. Peripherals included a program recorder for audio as well as programs that teach a language, a disc drive, interface module and, most exciting of all, a modem to connect the computer to the libraries of the world. Most impressive was that it was a complete system that daisy chained together. No worries about whether it would work.

The Atari went home with me that night. It was my first and only major purchase bought on impulse -- a decision, I might add, that I've never regretted. What's happened since? Well, I mated the system to a Brother HR-1 letter quality printer and put it to work a number of projects that would tax the capability of lesser units -- magazine articles, resumes, books, and a screenplay, which requires an unusual format with lots of tabbing that is duck soup for the Atari Word Processor. There are scads of other word processing programs for the Atari, such as Letter Perfect, Text

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package thrown in for free, I packed the family in the car and checked it out.

It was love at first sight. Not only did the unit look well designed, the ergonomics were first rate. The keyboard felt just like the Selectric and responded with a "click" to affirm the key entry was made. Upper and



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Back in '81, I was a freelance writer in search of a way to satisfy both my need for a word processor as comfortable as my IBM Correcting Selectric II, and my kids' growing interest in computers and video games. I was also becoming aware of something called data base accessing -- where one could do extensive library research without leaving the comfort of home. Through a process of elimination, I discovered that dedicated word processors couldn't perform all these functions, and the Apple II needed upgraded circuitry to provide upper and lower case letters and had cumbersome screen editing features. The portable Osborne was highly popular at the time, but the keyboard felt bouncy and the built-in video screen was too small. Besides, I wanted color, sound, graphics, and maybe some language programs to help the kids with their schoolwork. Oh, I also checked out the TRS80, but it just wasn't my cup of tea. But when a local dealer ran a special ad on Atari with the Entertainer game package thrown in for free, I packed the family in the car and checked it out.

It was love at first sight. Not only did the unit look well designed, the ergonomics were first rate. The keyboard felt just like the Selectric and responded with a "click" to affirm the key entry was made. Upper and

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Today, people are running around comparing RAM capacity, IBM compatibility, 16-bit microprocessors versus 8 bit, and maybe thinking of a 32-bit. Their research takes them down the road to confusion -- there's always something better just around the corner. Maybe if they wait long enough, they just might find something as versatile as an Atari.



SINCE YOU ASKED ...

by Kathy & Tom Sturza

Q: "The guy that continues to insist on complete silence, should be taught that mass meetings like M.A.C.E. are best held with discussion among the crowd, and that it doesn't look good to visitors to insist on the impossible, like the crowd has a combined intelligence of a 4 year old. (ie - speak louder, don't insist on silence.)"

A: I'm sorry that I do NOT share the above member's opinions. I believe that the majority of our members who attend meetings come to HEAR and SEE what we are presenting. We even output the audio from the Atari to a sound mixer, and then into the public address system, to try and provide better sound to everyone.

I personally spend many hours each month preparing for the general meetings. I also provide an agenda for printing in the Journal, as well as, placing it on most local Bulletin Board Systems.

Our speakers deserve the common courtesy of not having to try and talk over the audience to be heard. We do not pay them for their time or efforts. For example, one of our guest speakers for the March meeting is coming in from Chicago, Illinois. I do not feel that it is too much to ask that people be quiet during presentations. If you wish to talk, please do so before 7:30 or during the break.

As the elected Program Coordinator of M.A.C.E., I will continue to require "QUIET" during presentations. If the membership or any specific member is not pleased with the way I run the meetings, I see at least two options available to you: 1) Run for Program Coordinator in the September election or 2) Pick up your Journal, buy your disks or tapes and go home (no one makes you sit through our meetings).

Tom Sturza - M.A.C.E. Program Coordinator

Q: Can we keep the speakers from

swallowing the mike while speaking to the crowd?

A: The mikes that are supplied by the City of Southfield only work when one speaks directly into their tops (I don't know why). We will continue to remind speakers to talk clearly and into the mike.

Q: Why doesn't M.A.C.E. require up-to-date membership cards before selling disks or tapes from the Public Domain libraries? Such purchases are supposed to be a fringe benefit of being a member.

A: Your officers agree, but we don't have enough "help" available to do so (the Librarians are lucky to handle the volume of sales that they do today). If one or two members would volunteer to check membership cards each month, your officers would be very grateful!!

Q: I would like to know where I can find detailed technical interface information on the Atari disk drive. My plan is to communicate with it through my serial port at 19200 baud. I do not have an Atari computer.

Larry Stempnik
3204 Dawson
Warren, MI 48092
(313) 977-3503

A: Well, we struck out on the above request for help. If anyone out there can help Larry, please let him know.

Q: I would like to see a demonstration on the Atari translator for the 800XL. If this is not possible, how about an article in the Journal covering the use of both translator disks A & B?

A: We're planning an Atari 800XL demo for the April meeting. We'll see if the A & B Translators can be included. Also, why not stop by one of our advertisers and ask them for a demo.

Q: Why not set up a table for the re-sale of equipment and programs?

A: We've received many similar requests from our members. We are planning to have a hardware/software swap night as part of the June, 1984 general meeting. Details will be printed in the next two issues of the Journal. Also, we'll need volunteers to help "monitor" the swap portion of our meeting. If you would like to help out, please leave your name, address and home phone number in the Suggestion Box and indicate that you wish to help with the Swap Night.

Q: Why not start a LOGO SIG? Why not start a beginning Assembler SIG? What happened to the Telecommunications SIG?

A: M.A.C.E. encourages it's members to join or start Special Interest Groups (SIG) as the need arises. However, M.A.C.E. officers do not directly organize or run such groups.

As Program Coordinator, I would be willing to compile a list of interested parties for the above groups and mail each interested person the complete list for that SIG. The people on the list would then have to make arrangements to elect or find a chairperson and select a place to meet.

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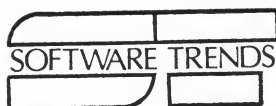
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THE ATARI IS DIFFERENT

One of the things that you always hear from other computer owners is "what makes you think that your ATARI is better?" Well I think that this is a very fair question, and I know that a lot of you purchased your machines because you asked the advice of some of us that "just wouldn't own any other home computer." So let's take a look at some of the things that really make this a better machine.

When the designers at ATARI set out to make a home computer, they set themselves a goal to make something that was not just comparable to the pieces of fruit that were on the market at that time, but to come up with something that was not, and will not become obsolete. The ATARI 800 was, and still remains the most inovative small computer ever developed.

The 6502 Central Processing Unit had the advantage of being able to handle graphics and sound better than any other chip then in production and still could handle the commands and calculations that make a computer different from a game machine. ATARI already had significantly more experience in the area of graphics and sound than any of their competitors as evidenced by their game machines and the new arcade games that they were just developing. But, how do you put this kind of capability in a small home computer? The answer was to use the CPU only for controlling the functions of the computer. A separate chip, the CTIA chip (now replaced by the GTIA) was developed to handle only the graphic instruction processing. This meant that the graphics could be greatly expanded and provided the ATARI with 8 graphics modes (now up to 15) compared to the two graphics modes found on the Apple. This versatility was even further advanced with the capability to mix these graphics modes on the same screen with some relatively simple programming techniques. While other home computers allowed for simple graphics formulation, ATARI had a machine that had the same graphics capabilities as their developing arcade games.

The next problem that they had to face was that of sound. If you had a machine capable of

duplicating the graphics of the arcade machines, you had to have a sound capability to compliment it. Instead of the single sound generator (or in some cases two sound generators) ATARI designed their machines with four separate programmable sound generators. If you have ever listened to four-part harmony on the ATARI, you know how spectacular the result was.

Faced with the complex graphics and sound capabilities the question arose how to get all of that information to t normal television screen. Apple (the other standard 6502 machine at the time) simply had the 6502 chip handle this function as well. This wasn't good enough for the ATARI since the graphics display and the sound capability would have taken up much of the CPU time from the 6502 simply to control the output to the TV screen (monitor capability was and is possible with the 800, but ATARI realized that this would be cost prohibitive for many people). The result was to build another processor chip (the ANTIC), who's only job would be to get the output of the 6502 CPU to the screen and speaker.

The results were revolutionary to say the least. Here was a home computer that had 3 separate controller chips in it instead of one. It had the graphics capability that other manufacturers could only envy, a separate chip to control it, four sound generators, and a separate chip to make sure that the results went to the TV set to give the best possible picture. All of the other computers were having their CPU do all of this work. Not only did the ATARI have better capabilities, but it developed them using better ideas (if you don't beleive this, then just try looking at a Commodore on a TV screen instead of a monitor.)

One of the results of this was that programs on the ATARI required less memory to run (how many times did you see programs released for a 48K Apple and 24K Atari?) but actually ran faster since the 6502 did not have to use up much of its time to control the graphics display and TV display.

The ultimate developement though was the developement of Player Missile Graphics (PMG). Using this feature one could develop action figures and move them around on the

screen, change their size, and even have them go in front or in back of each other while treating them almost like typing single characters. This was the feature that allowed the vivid, smooth flowing graphics displays that made the ATARI the "ultimate game machine."

This has been a boon to the computer enthusiast. Here he had a REAL computer that could also play the games that the kids were bringing bagfuls of quarters to the arcade to play. But the machine was much more capable than just playing games [a fact most non-Atari folks still don't realize-Ed.]. It had many other features that set it apart from the field as a COMPUTER. Unfortunately, ATARI did not put these features, and the result is that we now have a VERY powerful computer that has a great reputation as a game machine. When you say ATARI, most people think only of the 2600 & 5200 that they see advertised on the TV. ATARI, in my opinion really missed the boat in not advertising the 800 computer (and now their new machines) on their capabilities as a computer. If they ever get smart, I think that people will react the same way that they react when we demonstrate our systems to them. Unfortunately, they don't know what a great computer it is.

[Ed. Note--reprinted from "The RAAUG" published by the Randolph (TX) Area Atari Users Group, November '83 issue.]

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NEWSFLASH!

Spokesmen for a local electronics firm have announced a computer program that virtually eliminates lost time due to malfunctions of computer components, called "OREMA" (oh-ray-ma) from the latin oremus, meaning "let us pray." The program offers prayers at selected time intervals for the continued integrity of memory units, tape transports, and other elements subject to depravity.

Basically liturgical in nature and structure, OREMA uses standard petitions and intercessions stored on magnetic tapes in Latin, Hebrew and Fortran. It holds regular maintenance services thrice daily on an automatic cycle, and operator intervention is required only for mounting tapes and making responses such as "and with thy spirit," on the console typewriter.

Prayers in Hebrew and Fortran are offered directly to the central processor and disk storage units, but Latin prayers may go to other peripheral equipment for transfer to the central processor by internal subroutines.

Although manufacturer-supplied prayer reels cover all machine troubles known today, the program will add card prayers to any tape, as needed, after the final existing amen block. Classified prayer reels are available for government installations.

In trials on selected machines, OREMA reduced, by 92.3%, the average down time due to component failure. The manufacturer's spokesman emphasized, however, that OREMA presently defends only against hardware malfunctions. Requestor errors and other human blunders, will continue unchecked until completion of a future version, to be called sin-OREMA.

First reported by Twin City Atari Group (TAIG), Nov. 1983.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORNER
by Chas Nocita

Home Banking and the Atari

Ever since I got a modem for my Atari, I've become very comfortable using it to visit online all over the U.S. In addition to calling local bulletin boards, I have learned how to access the major databases, how to order items from various on-line catalogues and how to follow my stocks with Dow Jones. One of the things I would really like to see, is Home Banking. Recently, advertisements in some computer magazines have been looking for people interested in taking part in a home banking pilot program in the New York area. Unfortunately, New York is a little too far away for me to do my local banking.

I wondered if any of our local banks had considered home banking, so I called a few of them to find out. I found out that most local banks are interested, but because home computer users are still a minority, they have no plans to start in the near future. I'd like to let you know what I've found out so far.

COMERICA's Dave Taylor told me that the bank was watching developments in the home banking area, but COMERICA was not interested in being one of the pioneers in the field. Dave said that they would probably wait until all the bugs were out of the systems before they entered the market.

Tom Orrin, from National Bank of Detroit, told me that they had started a pilot program using some of the bank's employees and special terminals to test their software. N.B.D. has put considerable research and development into the home banking area. But because of deregulation in the banking industry, there were no plans to enter the market soon.

The best news came from Timothy Lemanski, an officer with First of America. He sent me an information package that explains about a program that First of America has entered into with Automatic Data Processing, Videotex America, and approximately 20 other leading banks nationwide. The idea is to create a computer network called Home

Banking Interchange to supply home banking to consumers. This program will use A.D.P.'s existing network and will supply some full color videotex services such as news, weather forecasts, and other services found in large databases. Initially, home bankers will have to use a special terminal supplied by ATT, but plans are there to convert the program so that any personal computer could be used.

Representatives of Manufacturers National Bank, came to our December meeting and demonstrated the program "Pronto". Manufacturers has joined in the experimental program marketed by Chemical Bank in New York. The program will start with 25 of the Bank's employees, and if successful, the pilot program will be expanded to include non-employees in the second quarter of 1984. The most interesting part is that the bank will be using Atari computers and the program will be available on a rom cartridge.



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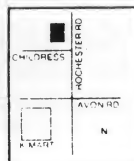
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ATARI MUSIC An Overview

by Mike Lechkun

My wife calls my late evening sessions "a night with the calliope." Being a musician, however, I hear nothing but the pure beauty of music when I boot my favorite music making program. The ATARI is without a doubt the best music-computer in the home computer field today. Giving the Commodore his due, the "64" comes close with its three-voiced, multi-timbred approach, and is a fairly good music computer in its own right. But four voice capability is more than just a luxury. It is musically essential when attempting to perform or transcribe today's music. The heavy dependance on the 7th, 9th, and other multi-layered and complex chord structures reaks havoc with those computers and software which allow only three simultaneous voices. Given also an audio output within the monitor jack, it is easy to see that the ATARI is the best computer hardware available. On to the software. . .

There are five major ways to make music on the ATARI. I will limit my discussion to only the music software. There are many music tutorials available, but their main purpose is to teach and not create. The five methods I will discuss assume some musical proficiency, and in my view aren't the best ways to learn about music, although they claim that it can be learned through the use of their program. A good grasp on music theory will allow the user to create hours of enjoyable music on these systems.

1. BASIC PROGRAMMING The ATARI allows you to create sounds through the use of the SOUND command. With this command you determine the voice (or musical "line"), pitch (or note value, such as C#), the distortion (or timbre, sort of the difference in sound between, say, an oboe and a clarinet), and the volume - loud (forte) or soft (pianissimo).

While it is difficult to create music this way, it is, nevertheless possible. Here, it is the ability to program, rather than musical ability that allows you to make your ATARI sing for you. MACE disk M features many popular selections programmed by Carlo Leto.

2. ATARI MUSIC COMPOSER (CXL4007) This is the only other cartridge that allows you to make music. It is very convenient and easy to use. And with only 16K and a cassette unit to save your creations, it is a nice program to start out with. Its ARRANGE feature allows you to replay many repetitive blocks of music without costing extra memory bits. Its orientation is on the Great Staff. This is not the crook you held as Noah in the Sunday School Bible Play! The Great Staff is the treble (G) and bass clefs of the familiar five-lined music paper. An ability to read music is important. This program has its drawbacks, however.

Your range of notes is rather limited. You're given the notes from C3 (one octave below middle C - the C right below the name of your piano) to C6. Just three octaves. Dynamics, or volume, while easy to set, remain at the same level through the entire arrangement and can not be adjusted. While the music plays, you can choose one of the voices to display on the screen. But it is hard to follow, as you can rarely get more than two or three measures up before it goes to the next "page" of music. Once you assemble a tune of some length, you'll be displeased by the horrible amount of time it takes to load the piece when you want to play it for your friends. I arranged Bach's Third Brandenburg Concerto in G on my M.C. and it takes 50 (fifty!) minutes to load FROM DISK. That's right, 50 MINUTES. While saving your creation on cassette allows you more memory room, it's loading time is EVEN SLOWER!

For someone who has got the basics of music down pat, this cartridge isn't too bad. It can be used with other programs to create an audio background to accompany your best graphic opus. But at \$39.00, there's better to choose from out there, like. . .

3. ADVANCED MUSICSYSTEM (APX-20100) This one's my favorite. It is easy for anyone with an understanding of music to use. Unlike Music Composer, this program is in disk format only. But it's range (from C1 to F6) surpasses any of the other systems currently available, and you've always needed a good excuse to go out and get a disk drive, anyway. AMS allows you to adjust volume levels as the piece progresses. It also allows you to

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change tempi by direct menu command, or as the piece progresses by use of paddle controllers. AMS permits you to string works together (to the limits of your machine's memory), or with the timing beeps, allows you to layer tracks on a multi-track recorder to get 16 simultaneous voices. And, lord knows, we ALL have multi-track recorders! Oh well, so much for the gung ho enthusiasm about AMS.

The less-favorable points about this system are few and far between. My only gripes are 1: I'd like to see this one put to cartridge form, and 2: as with Music Composer, you can't adjust the timbre (sound quality) of the notes. As my wife constantly reminds me: "it sounds like a calliope." 3: a normal or a staccatto (short and/or separated) effect costs you two memory bits a note - that can be disastrous if you have a piece of medium to long length. Assembling a song can get a little tedious at times, but the fruits of your labour are revealed when it's playback time! There are also a number of demonstration pieces on the disk which show the outstanding capabilities of AMS, for those of you who aren't into creating your own tunes. And an autoplay feature allows you to stage your own complete concert by playing all the songs you have on your disk!

During playback, your notes are displayed by the illumination of the piano key that is being sounded. That gets to be a little much after the first few measures of your song. But much of this is me being picky. Lee Actor has done a marvelous job of writing the BEST system for the ATARI computer. It can be found for under \$25.00 at many locations around town.

The above systems allow music to be inputted by means of the keyboard. I feel this is the best approach for anyone with an amount of musical ability. That usually translates to piano ability, or organ ability, or finger board (violin, guitar, etc) ability. The following systems are joystick-input systems. To me there is a degree of cumbersomeness in using a joystick for music. I find it most annoying in systems like. . .

4. POKEY PLAYER by Craig Chamberlain (Softside Magazine) I think this is the first review ever written on our own

MACE-resident-whiz's program. But don't let my talk about joysticks scare you away from this one. A wide range of notes are available to the composer, and percussive effects are also possible! The joystick allows you to select your note, duration, pitch and the like and insert it into the mainstream of the piece by pressing the fire button. A steady progression of notes previously entered go across the screen as you assemble your favorite tune.

Criticisms: its awfully hard to knock a program like this when you consider a couple of things. Like the cost. This program can be had for a song! (I know, bad pun) Either purchase the disk from the MACE library, or buy the three issues of SOFTSIDE it was printed in (numbers 33, 35, & 37 if memory serves me well) to get the documentation. Technically, the program allows only three simultaneous voices. Not to infer that you can't make music with three voices, it's just difficult to realise some of the more current tunes for the reasons given at the beginning of this article. The ranges for voices two and three are somewhat limited, and for this reason voice one should carry the melody. There are also a number of different versions out here in the Detroit area, and you might not have the most current (I'm sure Craig can remedy that if you provide him with a self addressed stamped mailer with your disk). I also found it easy to get lost while assembling a tune ("did I enter six D flat eighth notes or five?"). But POKEY PLAYER mania is rampant, and many songs are available in the area. It's a lot of fun!

And now the new kid on the block. . .

5. MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET by Electronic Arts. Sixteen year old Will Harvey has authored ECA's entry into the music biz. I was given a sneak peek at this one at the recent CES convention in Las Vegas. By using the hand icon (similar to ECA's Pinball Construction Set) you assemble notes on a great staff, create their durations and even construct more than one voice at a time! Everything up to now has been on a one-voice-at-a-time basis. You can adjust dynamics, timbre and tempi with the joystick operated hand. And so far, that's my only gripe - the joystick! MCS will supposedly have a keyboard option as well, and that'll

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Real Programmers don't comment their code. If it was hard to write, it should be even harder to understand and modify.

Real Programmers don't document. Documentation is for simpletons who can't read listings or the object code from the dump.

Real Programmers don't draw flowcharts. Flowcharts are, after all, the illiterate's form of documentation. Cavemen drew flowcharts; look how much good it did them.

Real Programmers don't read manuals. Reliance on a reference is the hallmark of the novice and the coward.

Real Programmers don't write in RPG. RPG is for gum-chewing dimwits who maintain ancient payroll programs.

Real Programmers don't write in COBOL. COBOL is for Common Business Oriented Laymen who can run neither a business or a real program.

Real Programmers don't write in FORTRAN. FORTRAN is for wimp engineers who wear white socks. They get excited over finite state analysis and nuclear reactor simulation. Real Programmers don't write in PL/1. PL/1 is for insecure anal retentives who can't choose between COBOL and FORTRAN.

Real Programmers don't write in BASIC. Actually, no programmers write in BASIC after reaching puberty.

Real Programmers don't write in APL, unless the whole program can be written in one line.

Real Programmers don't write in LISP. Only sissy programs contain more parentheses than actual code.

Real Programmers don't write in PASCAL, ADA, BLISS, or any of those sissy computer science languages. Strong typing is a crutch for people with weak memories.

Real Programmers' programs never work right the first time. But if you throw them on the machine they can be patched into working order in "only a few" 30-hour debugging sessions.

Real Programmers never work 9 to 5. If any Real Programmers are around at 9 A.M., it is because they were up all night long.

Real Programmers don't play tennis, or any other sport which requires a change of clothes. Mountain climbing is OK, and Real Programmers wear climbing boots to work in case a mountain should suddenly spring up in the machine room.

Real Programmers disdain structured programming. Structured programming is for compulsive neurotics who were prematurely toilet-trained. They wear neckties and carefully line up sharpened pencils on an otherwise clear desk.

Real Programmers don't like the Team Programming concept. Unless, of course, they are the Chief Programmer.

Real Programmers never "write" memos on paper. They "send" memos via MAIL.

Real Programmers have no use for managers. Managers are a necessary evil. They exist only to deal with personnel bozos, bean counters, senior planners, and other mental midgets.

Real Programmers scorn floating point arithmetic. The decimal point was invented for pansy bedwetters who are unable to think big.

Real Programmers don't believe in schedules. Planners make up schedules. Managers "firm up" schedules. Frightened coders strive to meet schedules. Real Programmers ignore schedules.

Real Programmers don't bring brown-bag lunches. If the vending machine doesn't sell it, they don't eat it. Vending machines don't sell quiche.



STARFIRE/FIRE ONE
by EPYX Computer Software

reviewed by Larry Lechkun

Starfire and Fire One are two different games that come on the same disk. Use your Option and Select buttons to choose which you wish to play. I will review them separately.

STARFIRE plays somewhat like Atari's Star Raiders. As a Starfire commander, you control the speed and direction of your joystick steered starship. Equipped with a laser, you're to prevent the enemy's "Exidy" freighters from reaching their destinations. But before you destroy them you must first outfly and outgun a series of enemy fighter pilots. If upon reaching the bonus score level, you advance to a higher plateau. This game has 16 levels each a little faster and difficult, but equally as boring!

Starfire is your basic shoot-em-up game that seems to be a translation from the old Exidy Sorcerer computer. Make sure your laser gun doesn't overheat in the thick of battle, and be careful not to fall asleep while playing this one!

Nautically speaking, FIRE ONE requires you to destroy the enemy fleet (again?!) and at the same time protect your home port. In scoring your given points for hitting and sinking enemy ships. The number of hits needed to sink a ship will vary, but a hit "dead center" will sink 'em immediately. To win a battle you must sink all 16 enemy ships or the enemy submarine. And of course bonus points will be awarded for successful missions (you'd expect anything else?).

At the top of your screen you will see the sonar scan, which gives you a long range view of both fleets. Below that, you'll see the insides of your torpedo room with eight torpedoes awaiting your selection of targets. Once you fire a torpedo, don't forget about the time it takes to reload the tubes. The timer is represented to the right of the torpedoes giving you the remaining time left to complete as many battles as you can.

The lower half of the screen consists of the periscope view. It shows a lesser range, but is a better view than the sonar, if you're into the scenery! This game is another shoot-em-until-your-thumb-gets-sore game guaranteed to lose your interest real soon.

Given this two-for-the-price of one deal, I still don't think it's worth the money. Star Raiders has all the shooting action that Starfire has, plus it's a cartridge, plus it has strategy. Fire One doesn't seem to be seaworthy, either.

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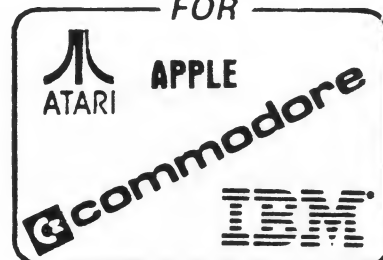
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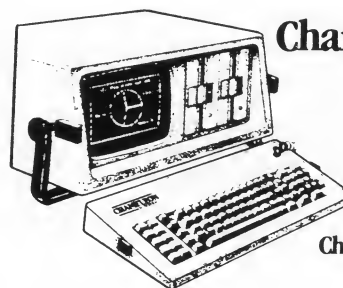
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